

WISHA REGIONAL DIRECTIVE

WISHA Services

Department of Labor and Industries

29.72

TAG LINE USE

Date Issued: July 3, 2000

I. Background

There has been some confusion regarding the application of “tag line” requirements in WAC 296-155-525(2)(f) and the meaning of the phrase “swing freely” as used in the standard.

The definition of “swing” is “to move rhythmically back and forth suspended or as if suspended from above.” The applicable definition of “suspended” is: “to hang so as to allow free movement.” (both definitions are taken from the *Webster’s 2, New Riverside Dictionary*, 1994 edition). It follows, therefore, that a load, suspended from a crane hoist line, may be free to move without “swinging freely.”

II. Scope and Application

This WISHA Regional Directive (WRD) applies to all WISHA enforcement and consultation activities involving the requirements of WAC 296-155-525(2)(f) as they relate to suspended loads. It replaces any previous guidance on the subject, whether formal or informal.

III. Interpretive Guidance

Do all loads suspended from a crane or similar equipment require a tagline?

No. WAC 296-155-525(2)(f) states: “A tag line or guide rope shall be used on all loads that swing freely. Guide ropes or tag lines shall be held by experienced persons.” *If* the suspended load swings freely (not under control) *and* no tag line or guide rope is being used, the employer is in violation. However, if the suspended load does not swing freely, the lack of a tag line or guide rope is not a violation.

This approach is consistent with WAC 296-24-24051(3)(p), the general industry requirement, which discusses rotation of the crane and the circumstances under which a load cannot be controlled and then concludes “a tag or restraint line shall be used when rotation of the load is hazardous.”

Similarly, ASME B30.5-1994, section 5-3.2.1.4, specifies in (m) that “Tag or restraint lines should be used to control swinging of the load,” when crane travel causes the load to swing and in (o) that “A tag or restraint line shall be used when rotation of the load is hazardous.”

Other WISHA standards addressing similar hazards take a similar approach. WAC 296-56-60083(7)(o)(ii) requires that “Loads requiring continuous manual guidance while in motion shall be provided with tag lines,” and WAC 296-304-07011 requires tag lines “on loads likely to swing or to need guidance.”

Therefore, the tag line requirement of WAC 296-155-525(2)(f) should be read to apply whenever *any* of the following occur:

- The load suspended by the crane in a static (non-moving) condition swings or is likely to swing back and forth (due to wind or other external factors) creating a control hazard.
- The movement of the crane or boom causes or is likely to cause the load to swing out of control, creating a hazardous condition.
- The load rotates, has rotated, or is likely to rotate in such a manner as to be out of control, creating a hazardous condition.

Tag lines are not required when *all* of the following are true:

- The suspended load can be expected to remain still when in a static (non-moving) condition and does not swing or rotate in a hazardous manner.
- The movement of the crane or boom cannot be expected to cause the load to swing or rotate in an uncontrolled manner that may create a hazard.
- The operator is in control of the movement of the load and a hazardous condition is not created.

Approved: _____

Michael Wood, Senior Program Manager
WISHA Policy & Technical Services

For further information about this or other WISHA Regional Directives, you may contact WISHA Policy & Technical Services at P.O. Box 44648, Olympia, WA 98504-4648 -- or by telephone at (360)902-5503. You may also review policy information on the WISHA Website (www.lni.wa.gov/wisha/).